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# Marymount High School in Arlington, Virginia

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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Marymount Commencement Address

at Marymount High  
School, Arlington Va.  
By Penelope M. Mansfield  
to be delivered

It is with a deep sense of pride that I am here today to address the 1955 graduating class of Marymount. Commencement Day is a momentous occasion in the life of every young lady. This day also has a very special meaning to me, as you know my daughter, Anne, is a member of this class. I am deeply honored that she should be an alumnus of Marymount, one of the finest educational institutions of its kind. If your formal education ends today or if you go on to schools of higher learning I think that you will find that Marymount has done much to shape the lives of all of you, a realization which will be more fully recognized in future years.

I do not come here today with any great words of wisdom. Anything I have to say on this joyous and yet solemn occasion can do little to impress upon you the great tasks that are before you. You are at the beginning of a new phase in your lives as you adults. You will have momentous decisions to make, decisions which no one else can make. Those of you being honored here today are graduating into a complex world which needs leadership and skills of all kinds in the near future. It will be you young ladies who will be called upon to meet these challenges.

Thirty years ago the future for women was very limited. This is no longer so. Today I venture to say that many of you in this class of 1955 will find yourselves within a few short years in New York, San Francisco, Paris, London, Mexico City, Bogota, Buenos Aires, or equally cosmopolitan centers. You will be working for the government, for private industry, or with your husbands. Many of you will have your own profession. The choice



as you can see, is much more varied than it used to be. I think it is safe to say that opportunities for capable young women are limitless.

Thirty years ago American interests were very limited. We were concerned largely about our own domestic problems. Today we live in the greatest Nation on Earth. American interests are scattered across the globe. We in America have been jolted into a new realization of the force of the world. We can no longer isolate ourselves from the affairs of international scope. The modern modes of transportation have brought us within hours of any point on either of the hemispheres. We have moved into a new age--the age of the atomic and hydrogen bombs. Our scientists have made fantastic advances in the realm of massive destruction. With a concerted effort these phenomenal accomplishments can be redirected to the benefit of mankind. We have recognized wide-spread human need and have set about through various assistance programs to assist the worthy and needy. In the postwar years the principal force with which we have had to contend is militant Communism. We <sup>have</sup> preserved our freedom which has been so threatened by the rise of totalitarian Communism and we <sup>will</sup> continue to do so.

Domestically, we in the United States are enjoying a ~~general~~ prosperity seldom, <sup>if ever, known</sup> enjoyed in the past. With a little initiative and determination the future for our young people will look exceedingly bright.

I need not dwell upon the responsibilities and decisions facing you in the next year and the years to come, for I am sure you are cognizant of these things. Many of you will con-



tinue your education, perhaps others of you will marry soon.

All of that is ahead of you. What is important for you to do today is to look back over the wonderful years you have spent at Marymount. You are at a certain point in life where you should stand back and look at yourselves. You are departing today from what may likely be the happiest and most pleasant ~~period~~<sup>years</sup> of your lives.

Looking back over the past several years in this glorious institution, can a Marymount graduate feel that she is ready to commence a life of full personal initiative in a world of turmoil and strife? I think so. The graduates of Marymount are well equipped to ~~take~~<sup>embark on</sup> the journey of life and to meet with confidence the challenge of the coming years. Yours has been the privilege of able guidance throughout the academic period by the Reverend Mothers <sup>and Sisters</sup> competent in the arts, the sciences, and, <sup>most</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>important, the things spiritual</sup> ~~wisdoms~~. The Reverend Mothers <sup>and Sisters</sup> have sought to develop in you the moral and intellectual virtues and to give you a complete education. They have sought to convince you that ~~the~~ happiness and perfection are <sup>NOT</sup> necessarily found in the pursuit of wealth, fame, or power, but rather in the unselfish devotion to <sup>God</sup> the highest ideals. and His designs for all of you.

You have been trained <sup>here</sup> to be leaders ~~in Catholic thought~~ <sup>and action</sup> and action-leaders in the service of God and country. That leadership will be <sup>a</sup> constructive one if you put into practice the fundamental principles and truths which you have learned here as students. Despite the temporary discomfort <sup>ad</sup> ~~they may occasion~~ and the consistency of conduct ~~they may demand~~, if you fail to adhere to these first principles in your own life your leadership



will have lost its value.

Beyond the academic accomplishments of high <sup>school</sup> I am sure that all of you have gained tremendously in other areas. Perhaps one of the most important of the ~~extra~~-curricular benefits is that you now recognize the value of doing things together. The young ladies enrolled at Marymount have a commendable record in community effort on the part of its students. Some of your life-long friendships have been formed here. You will have many fond memories encompassing your efforts in drama, sports, music, writing and the other <sup>activities</sup> ~~things~~ which add so much to the spirit<sup>y</sup> of <sup>a</sup> school.

It is well to remember, as you make your way in life, the importance of making friends, friends who will be with you, no matter what. Let us remember that money and wealth may go, but ~~a true friend~~ <sup>and a true friend</sup> and the comfort of the Lord are priceless treasures.

Independence of thought and action are attributes ~~that~~ which youth should possess and I sure that all of you do. Do what you believe to be right, even if it means that you must face a hostile world. Again I say that no matter what you do, work ~~hard~~. In reality I suppose I scarcely need tell you these things. Youth is wise, more often, than we know.

In ~~the meantime~~, <sup>nothing</sup> you graduates can possibly do will enrich yourselves more or hasten the triumph of faith or make a better contribution to your country ~~or to your fellowmen~~ than to proclaim and demonstrate the faith and learning you have gathered here at Marymount throughout your lifetime. <sup>A</sup> ~~My~~ each of you bring some<sup>thing</sup> to the ~~darkened~~ <sup>a</sup> world. *in need of light & understanding.*

to each of you  
In conclusion I wish to extend my congratulations and best  
wishes for the years to come. The Reverend Mothers <sup>and the sisters</sup> ~~and we parents~~  
can look with great pride upon this 1955 graduating class. I wish  
you the very best possible and Godspeed.

Your parents, relatives, & friends join with  
them in wishing you Godspeed & good luck.

44-830  
1200 hours

In conclusion I wish to extend my congratulations and best wishes for the years to come. The Reverend Mother and we parents can look with great pride upon this 1955 graduating class. I wish you the very best possible and Godspeed.

Your parents, relatives, & friends are all thinking of you & wishing you the best.

1500 Mass. Ave.  
Apt. 830